

Rival Suitors and a Power.  
Behind the Throne

# How to Treat a Woman

By Archibald Marshall  
Illustrated by H. S. Barbour.

ON a hot summer afternoon, at Sir John Radcliffe's house of Mepworth, perhaps one of the coolest places to be found was under the shade of a wide, stone-pillared veranda, which extended along the back of the house and turned the corner for a few yards, ending at a door which gave admittance to the west wing. The schoolroom devoted to the studies of Miss Norah Radcliffe was in this wing, and, as her governess had gone up to London for the day, Norah gathered together her books and rang for a footman to transport a table and chair to this corner. Norah opened an arithmetic book and immersed herself in figures.

BY and by the butler came out onto the main part of the terrace, followed by a young man. Norah thought her ladyship was here, sir," he said. "If you will take a seat a minute I'll go and tell her ladyship."

"Very good, sir," said the butler.

"Or Miss Radcliffe, you know. She'd do," said the young man confidently.

The young man, whose name was Charles Daubeny, began to pace the veranda, but he turned back again before he had reached the corner. Norah got up and took a peep at him.

"Oh, it's you, Dubbins, is it?" she said to herself, as she returned to her seat. "Yes, I dare say Miss Radcliffe would do, and I know Cropper will have the sense to fetch her instead of mother."

The butler returned in a few minutes, followed by another young man. "I'll tell her ladyship you are here, my lord, if you'll kindly take a seat," said the butler.

"Hulloa, Philbeach," said the first young man. "I thought you were in London."

"So am," said the other. "Just come down for the day. Where have you sprung from?"

"I've got a place near here—I drove over."

"I thought your place was in Norfolk."

"I've got two. Only just come in for this one."

"You're a lucky beggar then. It's as much as I can do to keep one place going."

"What's that you've got there?" asked Daubeny.

"This! Oh, chocolates," answered the other, producing a large cardboard box tied with a broad pink ribbon.

"Chocolates! Who for?"

PHILBEACH looked at him from under drooping eyelids.

"Look here, Charles, my boy," he said slowly, "better be have both come here on the same errand."

"I don't know what errand you have come on, but if you think you are going to do yourself any good by giving her chocolates, you must be a bigger fool than you look, if that's possible."

"I pass over the rudeness of your language, Charles. I may remark that these chocolates are not for—her. We will put them aside for the moment. I will state the situation in plain language. We have a young man here, the schoolroom. Radcliffe, here to propose to her. He has had much of a chance. Daubeny said mournfully, "Now you have come pirouetting along, of course I'm a goner."

"Well, I don't think you have got much chance. But I will be perfectly fair to you, my dear Charles. We will toss up to decide who has the first chance. It is now half-past three. First chance lasts till bedtime. If the winner—er—er—wins, there's an end of the matter. If he doesn't, the other has his chance after tea. Do you agree to that?"

Daubeny won the toss. He put his head in his hands and groaned.

"I'm in for it now," he said. "And she don't care for me a bit."

"How do you know?" asked Philbeach.

"Well, she seemed to like me well enough at first. But after a bit something went wrong. You put in your ear, I suppose, confound you!"

"I'm in for it now," he said. "And she don't care for me a bit."

"How do you know?" asked Philbeach.

"Well, she seemed to like me well enough at first. But after a bit something went wrong. You put in your ear, I suppose, confound you!"

"Well, I did say something, but—"

"Of course you did. My dear Charles, you don't know how to treat a woman. If you had played the game properly I shouldn't have had a look-in. As it is, I tell you quite frankly I think I have out done you."

"What ought I to have done, then?"

"You may divide women into three classes, according to age, each of which must be treated differently. Up to sixteen—chocolate creams."

"Don't they take them after that?"

"They don't take them seriously."

"Then what's that great box for?"

"These are for Sylvia—I think her name is Sylvia."

"Who's she?"

"I believe you have sometimes called in Lowndes Square on Sunday afternoon. You may have observed there, or more probably you have not, a leggy being in an improperly short frock, who took no part in the conversation and devoured large slices of seed cake. That was Sylvia."

"Oh, you mean Norah. I know Norah all right. I took her to the Zoo once."

"Did you. Well, that wasn't a bad move."

"It wasn't a move at all. I took her because I like the kid."

"Well, then—chocolate creams, up to sixteen. After that camaraderie."

"Camaraderie. From sixteen to the departure of youth—say forty—you make friends with a girl. She'll do the falling in love. You treat her as a comrade and a good fellow."

"What—slap her on the back—that sort of thing?"

OCCASIONS might arise in which you might even slap her on the back. The main thing is to show her that you like her company and yet don't care a hang whether you have it or not."

"Seems rather rot."

"It isn't at all rot. What you have got to do is to be permanently cheerful. Be as careless as possible, and

above all, cheerful. To finish up my little disquisition—from middle age onward, respectful admiration is your cue; admiration forming the main ingredients of the mixture in the earlier stages of maturity, the proportion of respect gradually increasing as—"

"Oh, that's enough, thanks! It strikes me we've been talking pretty freely. I wonder what's round that corner."

Daubeny rose and went to the end of the veranda.

"Good heavens, Philbeach!" he exclaimed. "Here's a table and a chair, and somebody has been reading and writing."

Philbeach joined him with cool deliberation.

"That's Norah," he said, looking at the open exercise book. "Is the ink dry? Yes, it's all right. She must have hooked it when we turned up."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Daubeny, in great perturbation. "Supposing she had heard what we were saying?"

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"I AM NOT IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM," SAID NORAH. "I'M JUST AROUND THE CORNER. I SHALL BE ABLE TO HEAR EVERYTHING YOU SAY."

"My dear fellow," said Philbeach, strolling back to his cushions, "women don't listen unless there's a door between you and them."

At the end of another ten minutes Miss Norah Radcliffe herself, looking as self-possessed and unconscious as you please, came out onto the terrace, her arm round the waist of her elder sister. Evelyn Radcliffe looked pretty enough to turn the head of any young man.

"Wherever can mother be?" she said, greeting the two men. "I would have come down long ago if I had known you were all alone. Now, Norah, dear, you must go back to your lessons. You have wasted a good hour with me this afternoon."

Philbeach came forward with an engaging smile.

"Ah, Miss Norah," he said, "I've brought a little present for you."

Norah took the box.

"You are really very kind, Lord Philbeach," she said.

Philbeach, if you please."

"Lord Philbeach, I beg your pardon. Are you sure you don't want them yourself?"

"Quite sure, thank you. I brought them on purpose for you."

"Then I'll take them. Thank you very much. I didn't think there were such kind people in the world. I had and argument with mademoiselle about that only yesterday. She said—"

"Now, Norah," interrupted her sister, "don't chatter any longer. Go back to the schoolroom."

"I'm not in the schoolroom," said Norah. "I'm just around the corner. I shall be able to hear everything you say."

And she departed to her books.

FOR the next few minutes a somewhat difficult conversation was sustained by the trio in the wicker chairs. Philbeach bore the burden of it.

The situation was terminated by the advent of Lady Radcliffe, brisk and cordial.

"Where is Norah?" she asked, after having greeted her visitors.

"Doing lessons, mother," said Evelyn.

"Now, that is top bad of mademoiselle," exclaimed Lady Radcliffe. "Where is Norah—in the schoolroom?"

"No, she is out here—just around the corner."

Norah looked up with patient sadness as Lady Radcliffe appeared.

"My dear Norah," exclaimed her mother, "you look tired out. Put your books away now and go and play."

"I haven't anybody to play with, mother dear," Norah said.

"I'll play with you," said Philbeach, who with the others had been spectator of this pathetic scene. "What shall it be? Cricket, or croquet, or what?"

"Oh, that is kind of you, Lord Philbeach," said Lady Radcliffe, "but you mustn't bother yourself about Norah."

"No, please don't bother about me, Lord Philbeach," said Norah.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Philbeach. "Come along now. What shall we play at?"

"Well, if you don't mind," said Norah, "I should like a little cricket practice. I've got nobody to bowl to me except the pony boy, and the head gardener won't let him come except in the evening—grumpy old pig."

"All right! Come along, we'll go and play cricket."

"Now, that is kind of Lord Philbeach," said Lady Radcliffe. "Go along, then, Norah." And she and Philbeach went off together.

"Now, I must leave you two people to yourselves," said Lady Radcliffe. "I have to speak at the Primrose League fete tomorrow, and I haven't quite finished my speech." And she disappeared into the house.

Daubeny remembered Philbeach's advice. "Look here, Miss Radcliffe," he said, jauntily, "you and I have been

pretty good pals lately, haven't we?"

"Have we?" said Evelyn demurely. "I didn't know it. We hardly spoke to one another for three weeks, and you were disagreeable for a long time before that."

"Disagreeable? Oh, I don't know! I only pretended to be disagreeable."

"Why?"

"I'm well—it's rather amusing to pretend to be disagreeable sometimes, when you're not really disagreeable."

"You didn't seem to find it very amusing. I never saw anybody go about looking so mopy. I felt rather annoyed."

"How's that?"

"Because I like to see people cheerful."

Daubeny brightened visibly.

"Do you?" he exclaimed. "Well, I'm one of the most cheerful fellows you ever saw. Jolly my coming to live near here, isn't it?"

"It must be very pleasant for you, certainly," said Evelyn, "to come in for a beautiful place like Perryes."

"Do you like Perryes?"

"Like it! Of course I do. I often used to think I should love to live there."

"Well, why don't you?" Daubeny asked her.

"You can if you like, you know."

Evelyn laughed nervously.

"Thank you very much," she said. "But what would you do?"

"I? Oh, I should be in and out, don't you know. I shouldn't bother you much. The house is plenty big enough for two."

"Oh, yes, it's rather too big, in fact. I am afraid I should feel rather lonely."

Daubeny felt he was getting on splendidly.

"Well, then, you could have your pals down," he said. "If you wanted to have any one down you'd say, 'Look here, Mary or Jessie, or whatever her name might be, I've got a jolly old place down in Surrey. You must come and give us a look up. There's only old Charles there—you remember Charles—he's all right. Then supposing I wanted to have any one down, I should say, 'Look here, old chap, you just give us a look up down at Perryes. I've got a few pheasants and things about, and you'll find a wife hanging around somewhere. But she's all right—she don't bite, and—"

"Mr. Daubeny!" interrupted Evelyn, sitting bolt upright in her chair. "You must be out of your senses!"

Daubeny sank to the very lowest depths. "I knew it wasn't a good," he said, dejectedly. "I said so. You won't marry me then, Miss Radcliffe."

"No, I won't," said Evelyn.

"Why not?"

Evelyn burst out laughing.

"What a ridiculous question!" she said.

"You don't like me well enough, I suppose."

"I liked you pretty well when I first knew you, till you began to get mopy and owlish. But even that was better than behaving like a—well, I won't say what. I'm going to find Norah and Lord Philbeach."

She got up and left him.

"Confound that fellow Philbeach!" Daubeny ground out between his clenched teeth. "That's what comes of being cheerful!"

Norah and Philbeach had made their way to the cricket-net and set up the wickets.

"I will go in first," Norah said, when everything was ready. "When you have got me out you can go in."

"Right you are," said Philbeach gayly. His first dozen balls or so were well off the wicket. Norah played them in first-class style, and whenever she had an opportunity hit the ball as far as her strength would permit. "I think you might let some of those straight ones off a bit," Philbeach said, after his third excursion into the country.

"I haven't had a straight one yet," said Norah. "You can hit as hard as you like when you are in."

"I will, too," said Philbeach to himself.

By and by he did bowl a straight one. Norah returned it hard into his hands, but he dropped it.

"Butter-fingers!" said Norah gravely and audibly.

Philbeach turned suddenly and bowled a fast, underhand ball which took Norah by surprise and upset her middle stump.

"Sneaks don't count," she said, returning the ball and putting up the wicket.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Philbeach, coming up. "You weren't ready for it."

"Well, then, if I wasn't ready, of course I'm not out," said Norah. "Play the game properly, please."

Philbeach bowled another fast ball which took her leg wicket.

"How's that, then?" he cried triumphantly.

Norah looked at him, inquiringly.

"Don't you know that you are not out unless you are bowled middle stump?"

"Well, really, Miss Norah! You—"

"Mr. Daubeny told me so, and he is one of the best cricketers in England. I suppose you'll acknowledge that he knows something about it?"

"I'm quite sure Daubeny never told you anything so ridiculous."

"Very well, then, I suppose I am telling lies. However, if you are so anxious to go in, you can if you like. I have been taught to give way to others, however unreasonable they may be."

"Oh, I don't want to go in. Only, look here! We'll have no more swiping. If you want to hit hard you must fetch the ball yourself."

"All right," said Norah.

PHILBEACH went back and bowled a lob, which Norah returned gently into his hands. She laid down the bat and Philbeach went in.

Norah bowled a slow, short-pitched ball, which Philbeach hit far into the field. Then he sat down on the ground. So did Norah.

"Come, run along!" he said. "It's your turn now."

"You said just now that if any one swiped a ball they must fetch it themselves," said Norah.

"I didn't. I said you must."

"Do you think that's fair—I'm to fetch my own balls and yours, too?"

"Well, I'm hanged if I'm going to fetch that one."

"I'm hanged if I am either."

There was a short pause.

"I don't, Norah. Not a bit."

"Yes, you do. You stole the scores of all the cricket matches in which he had played out of that lot I cut out. It spoils my collection."

"Oh, Norah, I—"

"He's an old dear. I saw him hit into the pavilion at Lord's, and I won't have him treated like that."

"Why you told me yourself to pay him out for talking about me as he did to Lord Philbeach."

"He didn't say anything. It was all that horrid old Philbeach. You can score off him as much as you like."

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"What do you want to make yourself so beastly disagreeable for?" inquired Philbeach.

"I disagreeable!" exclaimed Norah. "Yes, you," retorted Philbeach. "I've been pretty decent to you, haven't I? I lugged down that great box of chocolates on purpose for you."

"You can have them back—all except those I have eaten, and I'll pay you for them when I get my next week's money. I owe this week's to you, you know."

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I've trotted him round a little myself."

"How did you get on with him?"

"I think I've paid for the improperly short frock, and perhaps the large helpings of seed cake. I still owe for the leggy being. I'll work that off after tea."

WHEN Philbeach reached the terrace, Daubeny sprang up.

"You blazing ass!" he said furiously. "You put me up to all that folly to make me lose my chance. I've a jolly good mind to—"

"I perceive in you, my dear Charles, a rejected and not unnaturally disappointed suitor," said Philbeach. "Don't, however, blame my advice, which was perfectly sound."

"I'm off," said Daubeny, turning on his heel.

Philbeach went into the house, whence he appeared again shortly after with Lady Radcliffe. Evelyn and Norah came on to the terrace from the garden at the same time.

"I thought tea was ready," said Lady Radcliffe. "Oh! in the morning room, is it? Well, we had better go in, I suppose. But where is Mr. Daubeny?"

"He asked me to make his apologies," said Philbeach. "The fact is, he suddenly remembered he had asked his rector and his wife to call on parish business at 5 o'clock, and hoped you would excuse him."

"Dear me, how very provoking!" said Lady Radcliffe. "Come, let us go in. Norah, dear, have you cleared away your lesson books?"

"Not yet, mother dear," said Norah.

"Then take them indoors and go and wash your hands and brush your hair before you come down."

"Evelyn, you might send Robert out to take in the table," said Norah.

Norah, left to herself, went to the end of the terrace.

"I wonder if he has gone yet," she said. "No, he couldn't have. I'll send him a note."

She wrote: "Come to the south terrace at once, where you will hear of something to your advantage—A Friend." She folded the note, and directed it to "C. Daubeny, Esq."

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